MONTEREY NEWS

April 1999
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Awaiting spring

THE TOWN

A special town meeting will be held April 5 at the Firehouse. There are two articles up for consideration. The first relates to the distribution of taxes assessed to Monterey as our contribution to the operating budget of the Southern Berkshire School District for fiscal years 2000, 2001, and 2002. The assessment distribution on the table for voters is the result of months of mediation. In the plan Monterey would be assessed 9.099% of the operating budget for the next three years (as opposed to our current 9.70%); Alford 4.7304% the first year and 4.88% the next two; Egremont 14.564%; New Marlborough 17.755% the first year and 17.602% the next two; and Sheffield 53.8516% the first year and 53.8470% the next two.

Arriving at these figures has been a long drawn out process, one fraught with discord and animosity. In order for this part of the process to be resolved, all five towns must approve the proposed distribution. Voting will be by secret ballot on Article 1.

The second article for consideration is "... to vote ... to pursue special legislation that would allow all eligible members of the Monterey Fire Company to receive equitable tax abatements, or take any other action relative thereto." This article was already passed last year, but requires reconsideration and a revote due to the timing of last year's state elections. This article makes it possible for the town to consider special circumstances relating to tax abatements for fire company members who rent property or use a single building as both residence and business.

The Select Board encourages citizens to attend town meetings and to exercise their right to vote. It is not only a civic duty but crucial to the integrity of the process that the voters of Monterey be well represented at both the April 5 special meeting and the May 2 annual meeting.

With regret and congratulations the Select Board announced the resignation of Maryellen Brown, who has accepted the position of Business Administrator of the Southern Berkshire School District. Maryellen has served as Town Secretary for the past fifteen years. Many residents came to express their good wishes and share the farewell cake on Friday, March 19. While Maryellen will be missed greatly, we are sure she will serve the town well in her new capacity.

Kathleen Layton has been retained on a part-time basis to fill the Town Secretary position.

With great sadness we mourn the passing of Greta S. Cherneff, who served on the Finance Committee for nine years. On Sunday, March 14, the Meeting House was overflowing with friends and family giving testimony to Greta's life of loving service. As was her way, even while her illness progressed in the last few months, Greta, and her husband, Marty, put great effort into laying the groundwork for the 1999 town budget. She will be missed and remembered for a long time.

Her position on the Finance Committee will remain open until the May town electionsd.

A call for budget articles. The Select Board requests that anyone wishing to submit articles for consideration in the coming year's town budget do so to the Board by April 2.

Update on Town Office renovation. On Monday, March 1, the Select Board met with Robert Shumeyko (Program Manager) and Steve Hertzberg (Community Representative) of the state Department of Housing and Community Development (Community Development Fund, Division of Community Services) regarding grant funding for the proposed renovation of the Town Office. David Bixby, architect from Clark & Green, was also present.

The Town was refused grant funding from the state agency last year largely because our proposed renovations exceeded the stated guidelines for *barrier removal*. The discussion at the March 1 meeting focused on determining which aspect of our renoation plans might fall within the grant criteria, and how we might proceed. The intent of the state is to aid in ensuring handicapped accessibility to all town offices, so the proposed elevator and ramp could possibly be funded by a grant.

David Biixby has been asked to redraw this portion of the project, and, pending further discussion with the state, to resubmit the plans later in the year.

Renovation of the Meeting House proceeding on schedule. David Bixby and Keith Snow report that the Monterey Meeting House renovations will be complete sometime in June. Perhaps this will allow for a dedication in conjunction with the "I Love Monterey Day" celebration on June 17. We'll keep you posted.

Speaking of "I Love Monterey Day." The next meeting of the committee will be on Monday, April 12, at 7 p.m. in the Town Office. Please come if you are involved in coordinating an event or would like to be. We have confirmation that the Library will hold a book sale as part of the day's festivities; a full schedule will be published in the June and July *News*.

Tax credit for septic repairs. The DEP informs us that "... owners of residential properties who expend money to repair or replace a failed cesspool or septic system are entitled to a tax credit against their Massachusetts personal income tax. Payments for sewer connections are also eligible if the connection is replacing a failed ... system." This credit is effective for the tax year beginning January 1997.

Materials that explain the program and provide the correct forms are available at the Town Office. The Massachusetts Department of Revenue also operates a help line where home owners can find answers to questions about this program. The help line number is 1-800-392-6089.

Dog licenses. All dog owners are asked to register their dogs and receive new licenses from the Town Clerk, Barbara Swann, as soon as possible. If you recorded a dog on the Town census that dog needs to be licensed.

If you have registered your dog in the past with the Town, you may renew by mail. Please enclose copies of the most recent vaccination records for your pet. Or you may come in person to the Town Office on Saturdays between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

— Amy B. Goldfarb

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TOWN ELECTIONS SLATE

The following is the list of candidates for Town Officers in the May town election (* indicates incumbent). Only one seat, the 2-year Planning Board seat opened by the resignation of Maggie Leonard, is contested. Candidates for the uncontested seats have been endorsed by both the Democrat and the Republican caucuses.

Board of Appeals (5 years):
Dean Amidon*
Board of Assessors (3 years):
Jim Bracken*
Board of Selectmen (3 years):
Fred Chapman*
Cemetery Commission (3 years):
Jane Thorne*
Finance Committee (3 years):
Stanley Ross
Library Trustees (3 years, 2 seats open):
Laurie Shaw*
Linda Thorpe*
Moderator (1 year): Mark Makuc*
Park Commission (2 seats open):
Denise Andrus (3 years)
Marta Makuc (2 years)
Planning Board (2 seats open):
Dan Andrus (5 years)
David Logan (2 years, Rep.)
Jon Sylbert (2 years, Dem.)
Tree Warden (1 year): Roger Tryon

Here are brief biographical sketches of the non-incumbents running for uncontested seats, based on information they submitted.

Dan Andrus (Planning Commission), a Monterey native, trained at the National Fire Academy and as an Emergency Medical Technician and was a professional fire fighter for several years before returning to Monterey to start a family and an electrical contracting business. He has served the community as a member of the committee for the Edith Wilson House, chairman of the Anniversary Parade, chairman of the Lake Buel Restoration/Preservation District, volunteer fireman, and Assistant Fire Chief.

Denise Andrus (Park Commission), a South Egremont native, graduated in interior design from the University of Bridgeport and is a senior designer in an Otis firm specializing in gas station and convenience store design.

Marta Makuc (Park Commission), a Monterey native, graduated from Providence College in humanities and theology, then worked for a year in Chicago with inner-city high school students in the Dominican Apostolic Volunteer Program. She has recently begun working as the Program Director for the Southern Berkshire YMCA in Great Barrington.

Stanley Ross (Finance Committee), a part-time resident of Monterey for twenty years and now here full time, recently retired from his accounting practice in New York and has extensive experience in real estate as well.

The following letters of introduction have been submitted by the candidates for the contested 2-year Planning Board seat.

David Logan (Republican nominee):

"I moved to Monterey as a full time resident in 1995 after being a lifelong summer resident on the New Marlborough side of Lake Buel. More than twenty years ago I purchased a summer home on the Monterey side.

"A graduate of Trinity College in Hartford, my entire working career was spent at Gerber Scientific Inc. in South Windsor, Connecticut, where I organized and ran two divisions, Gerber Scientific Products and Gerber Optical. Since my retirement I remain on the boards of directors of these companies and consult to them one or two days a week.

"Although not born in the Berkshires, my move to Monterey felt like coming home since my family roots are here, my father and grandfather both having been born and raised in Great Barrington.

"I was involved with the formation of the Lake Buel District and served as president of the District Prudential Committee for three years. Now that I am retired and have become a full time resident of Monterey, I feel the time is right to become more involved in the town."

Jon Sylbert (Democratic nominee):

"I have been visiting Monterey since 1965 and went to boarding school in Williamstown. My wife, Lisa, and I moved to Great Barrington in 1995. While living in Great Barrington she and I were drawn to Monterey, hiking and walking the roads and trails on many a weekend. We now are living in Monterey, where we have bought land and plan to build a house that we have designed. We are fortunate indeed.

"I have a college background in architecture and community planning. Lisa works in the region as a sign language interpreter for the deaf, and I work at the American Institute for Economic Research, a nonprofit, charitable, educational organization, and also for American Investment Services, a for-profit investment advisory company owned by AIER, in Great Barrington, as an editor and graphic designer. I'm a member of the board of the Monterey Preservation Land Trust, the bookkeeper (with Lisa) for the Monterey Coop, and the former assistant editor of the *Monterey News*.

"I've been attending the Planning Board meetings for the past six months and have enjoyed them and have learned a lot. The kinds of issues that come before the Board are all unique in some way and require a particular kind of problem-solving which interests me and for which I feel I have an aptitude. If elected to the Planning Board I will do my best to add something worthwhile to the process of resolving the often complex issues that come before it. I will work diligently on all Board matters, and look forward to being a part of the working crew that will help produce the Town Plan now in progress."

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POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT NEAR BLUE HILL ROAD

A development that could almost double the number of residential properties on Blue Hill Road may be on the horizon. Right now the project's future is unclear due to varying interpretations of laws, deeds, and documents.

The property in question, currently owned by Joanne Brett Simms, consists of approximately 68 acres off the north side of Blue Hill Road and is bisected by a roadway, owned by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (D.E.M.). The roadway runs from Beartown State Forest through the abutting Simm's land and then through the land of various other owners (all previously owned by Noel Hart) before connecting with Blue Hill Road. This roadway was once a county road, but was officially discontinued in 1906. At that point the land reverted to the abutting landowners, Brett and Hart. In 1940 the Commonwealth purchased this strip of land from them to create a way to have better access for its operation of the state forest.

Last summer Simms and her husband, Ronald Simms, asked the Monterey Planning Board about the feasibility of cutting up her land using the Form A subdivision procedure. Form A is a simple means of subdividing land in which the Planning Board certifies that submission and approval of a full-blown subdivision plan is not required and that the applicant may proceed as of right.

At the July 1998 meeting of the Planning Board, a memorandum, written by Marcos Pittore, D.E.M.'s in-house counsel, was reviewed. Pittore's memo concludes that Brett could not "access the premises from Blue Hill Road based on these documents alone." (The documents are the 1940 deeds from Rufus Brett and Noel Hart conveying the roadway strip to the Commonwealth.) Since access and sufficient road frontage are basic requirements for Form A applications, nothing proceeded further.

In November 1998 a letter from Katherine Lewis, Chief of Legal Services for D.E.M., was sent to Kirk Whitaker Jones, Ms. Simms's lawyer. The letter included a second opinion in the form of a memo from Robert Spencer, a lawyer in the firm of Seewald, Collins and Jankowski of Amherst. Mr. Spencer came to a somewhat different conclusion than did Pittore. Ms. Lewis's letter states that it is Mr. Spencer's opinion that Joanne Brett Simms "has a right of way by implication over the road to her property."

In a telephone interview, Ms. Lewis stressed that this is a very complex situation. When asked why a second legal opinion was obtained, she explained, "It's standard practice when preparing a case for the Attorney General." When asked why they would do that, she said, "If we had a problem with what was happening, a problem with the road, only they [the Attorney General] can make the legal case."

When asked if the state will allow Simms to use the D.E.M. roadway as a right of way, Lewis said, "All I can tell you is we have gone to an outside examiner who could not make a definite determination." She then stated that the state wants municipalities to make decisions, and when reminded that the state needs to decide about the status of the right of way, she reiterated the importance of the role of municipalities and their town counsel.

Presuming that the Simms right of way was acknowledged by the Commonwealth, Mr. Jones, on December 15, 1998, sent a letter to the then Chair of the Planning Board, Maggie Leonard, regarding the board's role in assessing the actual physical status of the roadway. Since it is not a town road, but did exist prior to 1966, it is, according to Monterey's zoning bylaws, up to the board to decide whether the roadway can safely accommodate "the needs of vehicular traffic in relation to the proposed use of the land...." According to Hugh Cowhig, Monterey's town

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counsel, the Planning Board must examine the road's actual condition at the time of a Form A application. Simms recently began bringing in truckloads of gravel and a number of new culverts to improve the quality of D.E.M.'s roadway.

If the road can be sufficiently improved, based on the length of the roadway, there is a strong likelihood that approximately ten new building lots could be created.

In a telephone interview with Jones about the situation, he said that part of the controversy is because a lot of people thought the land was state-owned. He added, "It could have been, had the state wanted to buy it at a reasonable price. It would be available, but I don't think they have the money to buy it." He added that his client "wants to place the land on the market to sell. It depends upon who wants to buy it. I think they will be large lots; it's a matter of public interest." Asked about when he would move ahead, he responded, "Presumably at the next Planning Board Meeting." That meeting will be Thursday, April 8 at 7 p.m.

Jones also said that his client wanted people to know that she was "pretty proud of the longevity of her family's ownership of the land. [She's] not someone who has come in the last ten years and wants to develop it. It's about people that have owned the property for over two hundred years."

According to current Planning Board Chair Gerry Shapiro, Ronald Simms, Joanne Brett Simms' husband, has recently submitted a building permit application to build a pole barn on their existing undivided lot.

— Karen Shreefter

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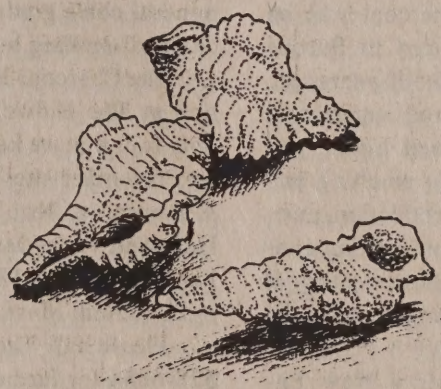
Awaiting spring



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THE BIDWELL HOUSE

Charcoal Burn Demonstration

On Saturday April 24 and Sunday April 25, The Bidwell House will present a Nineteenth-Century Charcoal Burn Demonstration and Lecture. The burn will be presented at The Bidwell House beginning at 11:00 a.m. on both Saturday and Sunday. The museum's Farm and Forest Trades Coordinator, J. Thomas Weldon, will do the demonstration. Victor Rolando of the Society of Industrial Archeology will give the lecture and slide presentation. This program will take place at 8:00 p.m. at the Monterey Meeting House (United Church of Christ) on Route 23 in Monterey center. The entire program is funded by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, and admission is free.

The making of charcoal was an ancient process, practiced in Europe possibly back as far as 5,500 years ago. Charcoal was considered superior to wood because it burned hotter and cleaner. It was used for smelting and shaping metals, glass production, purifying food and water, and making gunpowder. In the nineteenth century it was also used for making iron for the railroad.

In nineteenth-century New England, charcoal was an important part of the woodland economy. In the mid–nineteenth century Monterey was the largest producer of charcoal in Berkshire County. The Bidwell House property has two historic burn sites where charcoal was made for use at the Richmond furnace.

Charcoal was probably first produced by the pit kiln method. It is the process in which wood was slowly burned in a shallow pit covered with soil. Eventually the forest kiln method was developed which was more efficient and more manageable. Charcoal making was the most time-consuming aspect of iron production. The colliers, or charcoal makers, worked from late March until early November, living in huts at the burn sites. There they tended as many as 15 piles at a time with their assistants. The colliers' chief customers were blacksmiths and ironmakers.

The demand for charcoal was high nationwide until after the Civil War. After the war the mining of cheaper mineral coals gradually took over the charcoal-making industry.

The Charcoal-Making Demonstration at The Bidwell House is one of only four that we know of in this country. The other sites are Conner Prairie Museum in Noblesville, Indiana, Hopewell Valley Museum in Elverston, Pennsylvania, and Plimouth Plantation in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Please call The Bidwell House at 528-6888 for further information.

— Anita Carroll-Weldon

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For Information and Assistance:

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MaryKate Jordan 528-5557

LAKE GARFIELD ASSOCIATION

Our association has been studying Lake Garfield for several years. It is evident that the Eurasian milfoil weed has caused a disruption of boating, swimming, and fishing. The weed is a nuisance in lakes nationwide, not just in Lake Garfield. Several colleges, including Middlebury College, have been engaged in research on this non-native weed pest. Increasing the supply of naturally occurring, tiny water weevils has been found a safe and effective means of controlling milfoil in several lakes in our area. This approach has been approved by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

Scientists at Middlebury College have helped us to assess our lake environment and slightly increase the weevil population. Weevils are now available commercially as the Middfoil Process. Our objective for 1999 is to increase our weevil population in areas of high milfoil infestation. Enviroscience, Inc., will map those areas for us.

How can you help? A $10 donation will bring one weevil family to Lake Garfield this spring. Such a "family" consists of a breeding female, larvae, and males to maintain a male-female ratio that will promote the breeding habits of this insect. Early weevils, introduced into lakes in the spring, produce many more weevils than those brought to the lake later in the season. Early weevils are also more expensive! So far members and friends of the Lake Garfield Association have donated more than $570 to our weevil fund. Additional contributions are needed! Family memberships are $20 per year. Checks for the weevil fund and for family memberships should be made out to the Lake Garfield Association and mailed to P.O. Box 7, Monterey, MA 01245.

Everyone is invited to our first meeting of 1999—10 a.m. on Saturday, June 26, at the Firehouse.

— Jana Shepard, Vice President
Lake Garfield Association

UPDATE FROM BALTIMORE

Greetings friends and neighbors. It is starting to be spring down here in Maryland with a few warm days in the sixties and some crocuses and daffodils showing up around town. I am with John at the James L. Kernan Rehab Hospital where he is recovering from injuries that he sustained in a serious auto accident on February 8, 1999. I don't think that I gave the details in my last letter to the *News* so let me explain what happened.

John was traveling south on Route 81 in Pennsylvania, on his way down to Nashville, Tennessee, when a car in the northbound lane traveling at 75 m.p.h. lost control and crossed the median that divides the highway, went up on two wheels, and actually flipped into the air and landed on John's Ford Explorer. There were photos printed in the Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, newspaper that were horrible, and it is a miracle that John is alive at all. The driver of the other car (a Geo Metro) is deceased. The accident happened at 5:15 p.m., and there is no evidence of alcohol or drugs involved—it seems to be just an incredibly unfortunate incident.

Back to John who, as I mentioned, is alive and kicking (literally) and making good progress at the rehab hospital. When John was transferred to Kernan two weeks ago,e was unable to do anything. Now he can sit up in a wheelchair, hold up his head for short periods of time, and he has begun to talk. He recognizes people and can remember family members and friends in photos, and has even spoken to some on the phone. However John is also confused and is physically very agitated, which is normal for a patient with a head injury. As most of you know John has many broken bones which complicate his rehabilitation process, but these will heal over time.

As a matter of fact, at this point everything takes time and effort. Wanting things to move along quickly is about as effective as urging a seed to germinate—which is to say not at all. I continue to be bolstered by the wonderful support from our town and at this point I am able to share cards and letters with John. Each one is like a ray of sunshine, and (to take the seed metaphor a bit further) they warm us and help us grow daily. I don't know how to say this any other way but it is important for everyone to know that we are in for a long haul. It is impossible to explain here how much work John has to do—he is basically starting from scratch. I remain optimistic about John's recovery and I am with him each day to help and encourage him in any way I can.

At some point I need to come back to the Northeast and research some rehabilitation hospitals closer to home that specialize in head injury. I look forward to seeing the town that I miss so much and all of you that I love so dearly. Thank you for all the love, energy, prayer, light, and warmth that you are generating for us. It feels great.

—Maggie Leonard

JULIE SHAPIRO EXHIBIT IN NEW YORK

New paintings by Monterey artist Julie Shapiro will be exhibited at the Elizabeth Harris Gallery in Manhattan from April 22 through May 22. Julie, daughter of David and Gerry Shapiro, also of Monterey, earned degrees in art and painting from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and the Yale School of Art. She has taught at Southern Methodist University and is currently teaching at Hampshire College. Her paintings have been exhibited in several galleries around the country, but this is her first one-person exhibit in New York. About her paintings Great Barrington gallery operator Geoffrey Young has said, "At the center of Julie Shapiro's work is a firmly held belief in the physical presence of painting. The very hand-made look of her signature stripes and surfaces creates an arena for contemplation, and rewards looking by integrating the palpaable (color, composition, process), with the impalpable (harmony, ineffability, poetic purity)."

The Elizabeth Harris Gallery is located at 529 West 20th Street and is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

— Will Marsh

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SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE REGIONAL SCHOOLS

Apportionment of assessment: the next steps. With the three-year mediated settlement of the dispute regarding apportionment of operating budget assessment firmly backed by most of the leaders in the five District towns, there is reason for some optimism about approval, as the special town meeting votes on the Regional Agreement change come into view. The first of the special meetings is set for Monday, March 22, in Egremont; the remainder of the special meeting schedule on the assessment issue includes: March 30 in Sheffield and Alford; April 5 in Monterey and New Marlborough. All meetings are scheduled for 7:00 p.m. The Superintendent's schedule includes the meetings in Egremont, Alford, and New Marlborough. Maryellen Brown may be able to attend the Monterey session.

School lunch program. When Tom Morrison left his post as the chief cook in our food service operation in October of 1997, many believed that the very successful school lunch program was in for a major letdown. Liz Campbell, long time second in command, was elevated to the top spot, and she has proven to be an excellent choice. The winning attitude that Liz brings to her Southern Berkshire work is obviously an important element in the fiscal success of the SB school lunch program. The percentage of students in this District (approximately 20%), eligible for free and reduced lunch prices via the federally subsidized school lunch program is comparatively small. Because the federal subsidy for the free and reduced program is quite generous, the school lunch programs that can reasonably be assured of a positive balance sheet are those found in the less affluent inner-city or rural regions of the country. Where the percentage of full paying customers is higher, the usual scenario in the school lunch program finds local budget subsidies balancing the programs. In the SB case, the excellent meals prepared by the cafeteria staff headed by Liz Campbell prompt a higher than usual participation rate by students and staff, and thus the program account reflects a positive, black ink position because of the volume of business going through the turnstiles and not through a local subsidy. An Eagle Feather to Liz Campbell for preparing such nutritious meals for the SB students and for being so willing to accommodate the many special requests to keep the customers satisfied.

Descriptive Choice brochure. A tri-fold brochure describing Southern Berkshire Schools has been completed. The brochure should prove useful in introducing area residents and prospective students and employees to our schools and programs; it should be especially helpful for those considering the Choice route to an SB Schools. Our thanks to Cieran McCabe of Alford for his help in preparing the tri-fold. The availability of a Janet's Fund grant to get this community relations project off the ground was most helpful, and we are very grateful for such support. In future SB District budget deliberations the matter of community relations initiatives, particularly those that impact the quite competitive School Choice scene, should be considered carefully. Assuming that the expense of community relations efforts can be efficiently eliminated from the budget without negatively impacting the District's prospects in the various marketplaces within which it must operate is probably incorrect.

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A POSTSCRIPT

Judging by the questions and comments regarding my February article, I was not as clear as I should have been. The longstanding controversy that I have with the institutional Christian Church and its professional ministry has been the source of much personal discontent. The discontent and resulting disenchantment come honestly. I was born and raised in it as a "preacher's kid."

My comments in the February issue of the *Monterey News* were directed at the "larger" church, not the Monterey church. My experience of both church and ministry with the local congregation has been unlike any that I have had with the other churches I have served. I am not sure what I have given, but I do know what I have received! Love, acceptance, tolerance, patience, encouragement, humor, strength, support, to name a few gifts. We have not become enmeshed in doctrines and ideas. We have tried to embody the person of Jesus as opposed to the doctrines of the institutional church. It is the preoccupation of the latter with the protection of its vested interests that arouses my discontent. And it was that which I was addressing in February. To continue . . .

And Other "Stuff"

A few weeks ago I was on retreat at Weston Priory (Benedictine) in Weston, Vermont. (I have been going there for nearly 25 years.) The day I left, the brothers were hosting a visit from the Buddhist community near Hartland, Vermont, an offshoot of the Plum Village retreat community in southern France that was started by the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh. I noticed, when glancing in the chapel, that chairs had been arranged for the visitors on a lower level from that used by the brothers for midday prayer. I came away feeling that there is an unfortunate "class" distinction being perpetuated in that arrangement. Unfortunately, the chapel, a renovated barn, reflects the Christian Church's hierarchy in architecture. The chancel or choir was traditionally for the "religious," i.e., the ordained and the monastics. The rest of the church or sanctuary was for the common folks. And generally the two did not mix (and that is still often the case). This architectural arrangement gave rise to a mystique that has surrounded the role of "the religious" in the secular world. You know, ministers are closer to God—so if you want to know what the weather is going to be, you consult a minister, not a weatherperson! Soon ministers were believing that they were closer to God than anyone else. And before long, it seems like everyone was believing it!

This development of a caste, with all its attendant pitfalls, is not unique to the institutional church. It pervades many other institutions as well; for example, the medical profession. What troubles me about both is that the person on the street has abdicated his or her place in the scheme of personal health and religious living. It appears to be easier to ask the doctor for a prescription or an operation than it is to pay attention to our living habits. Let the minister or the priest take care of our relationship with God, especially when something goes wrong! And once we have declared that we are no longer responsible or accountable, it is easy to find someone or something else to be responsible or to blame. So our society is being transformed into an adversarial arena. Degrees, titles, uniforms, cars, houses, or the absence thereof, are often determining factors in how people are seen and related to.

To return to the Vietnamese monks and the Benedictine monks at Weston, roles can serve a very useful purpose. But only if the person who fills a role stands alongside the rest of the people. Ministers (as well as doctors, lawyers, teachers, politicians) serve best when working with rather than in place of. And so we all enter into the journey together, whether it be our relationship to God, our health, our education, our government.

To conclude with a story:

> In the age when life on earth was full no one paid any special attention to worthy men, nor did they single out the man of ability. Rulers were simply the highest branches on the trees and the people were like deer in the woods. They were honest and righteous without realizing that they were "doing their duty." They loved each other and did not know this was "love of neighbor." They deceived no one yet did not know they were "men to be trusted." They were reliable and did not know that this was "good faith." They lived freely together giving and taking and did not know they were generous. For this reason their deeds have not been narrated. They made no history.
>
> (Chuang-tzu, in *Soul Food,* edited by Jack Kornfield and Christina Feldman)

Maybe we should be more concerned about our "absence" in history than our "presence"!

— Keith Snow

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THE FAMILY NETWORK/ CHILDREN'S HEALTH, INC.

The Family Center is located at 940 South Main Street, Great Barrington. Call 528-0721 for information. All activities are at the Family Center unless otherwise noted.

Family Network News: We try to provide programs in which parents have expressed an interest. To assist us with our planning, it is very important for parents to preregister and to let us know if childcare will be needed.

We have had a request for a group for parents of adopted children. Please call the Family Center in Great Barrington if you are interested and let us know what day and time of day are best for you.

We are willing to offer an infant-toddler CPR class in Otis. Please call if you are interested. Let us know the day and time of day best for you.

A new playgroup is being planned at the Berkshire Community Church, Cemetery Road, Richmond. The group will meet from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on the following Tuesdays: March 16, 23, 30; April 6, 13, 27; May 4, 11. For more information, please call the Family Center.

New videos and books in the Lending Libraries of Great Barrington and Otis: *My Thumb and I* (book); *Building Blocks,* parenting series; *It's Potty Time; Let's Go Potty; Songs and Fingerplays for Little Ones; Baby's First Impressions–Numbers; Baby's First Impressions–Opposites; Baby's First Impressions–Animals; Oh Baby* and *Those Baby Blue Eyes* (guide for big brothers and sisters).

Drop-in times at Great Barrington site: Mondays and Fridays, 12 noon–2 p.m.; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 3–5 p.m.; Thursdays, 10–12 noon. Other times, please call for an appointment. Otis site (Town Hall, Second Floor): Thursdays, 10 a.m.–12 noon.

Every Monday and Friday, Play and Learn Group for three- and four-year-olds, 9–11 a.m. Preregistration required, please call.

Every Tuesday, Mother-Baby Exercise Class, 8:30 a.m. Preregistration required. Childcare provided.

English as a Second Language (ESL), 9:30 a.m. every Tuesday, Friday, 12 noon–2 p.m. Childcare provided. Please call to register.

Every Wednesday and Thursday, Parent-Child Playgroup at the Family Center in Great Barrington, 9:30–11:30 a.m. Some special events will also be planned on Thursdays.

April 2. Family Center will be closed. Best wishes for the holiday!

April 3. Infant-toddler CPR, Lee Ambulance Squad, Main St. Lee, 1-4 p.m.; childcare available. Call to register, 243-5550. For childcare call: 528-0721.

April 6, 13, 20, 27, May 4, 11. Tai-chi lessons for adults, 12:30 p.m. Call for information, for fee, and to register.

April 6. Workshop, "Conflict Resolution," led by Nancy Eggen, Women's Support Services, Northwestern Connecticut, 7 p.m. Open to public, sponsored by licensed daycare providers group.

April 10. Father-child activity (mothers are also invited): trip to Gould Farm, Monterey. Visit the greenhouse, plant seeds, visit the animals. Wear boots. 10:30 a.m.

April 12. Father-child playgroup: parachute play and paper airplanes, light supper, 5:30 p.m.

April 13, 27. Storytime at Community Center, Sandisfield. 10:30 a.m., led by Sue Tarasuk. Sponsored by the Sandisfield Arts Council and Family Network of Children's Health Program.

April 14. Big Brother, Big Sister Sibling Preparation Class, led by MaryJane Sackett, RN, 3:30 p.m.

April 14. First Aid led by Marsha Harvey, EMT, 6 p.m.

April 15. Parent-infant drop-in. Baby Massage led by Vicky Guy, LPTA, 1 p.m.

April 16. Open House for Family Center and South Berkshire WIC in Otis, 10 a.m., at the former school building, Route 8. Playgroup will be held, snacks, story about the red bird, craft: make a bird to take home.

April 16. Parent to Parent Volunteer Lunch, Great Beginnings, Great Barrington, 12 noon.

April 17. Storytime ideas led by Gretchen Courage, 10:30 a.m. Parents and children will learn of ideas and activities to make reading fun. Children will get a free book and book bag.

April 19, 26, May 3. Parenting discussion sessions led by Gretchen Courage, First Congregational Church, Lee, second floor; childcare available; 7 p.m. Call 528-0721.

April 19-23. Regular playgroups will not be held due to school vacations. Drop-in times will be held as planned. Special activities have been planned for the Week of the Young Child.

April 19. Parents without Partners meeting, 5:30 p.m.

April 20. Workshop: Art and Children, led by Gretchen Courage, 6:30 p.m. Appropriate for parents, playgroup leaders, licensed day care providers, anyone who works with young children.

April 21. Special Program: Roger, the Jester, 10:30 a.m., sponsored by the Arts Council of Great Barrington.

April 23. Yoga with children and parents, led by Evelyn Gonzales, 10:30 a.m.

April 24. Dollar-a-Bag Sale at the Clothing Exchange in Great Barrington. Help us get ready for the spring clothing line and earn some money for the Family Center; 10 a.m.–12 noon.

April 28, May 5, 12, 19. Storytime at Otis Library, led by Debora O'Brien, 2 p.m. Sponsored by Otis Arts Council and Family Network of Children's Health Program, Inc.

April 28. Mothers of multiple births night out. Call Melissa Zdziarski, 229-3557.

— Claudette Callahan

MONTEREY LIBRARY

Monday ..... 7–9 p.m.
Tuesday ..... 9:30 a.m.–noon
Wednesday ..... 3–5 p.m.
Saturday ..... 9:30 a.m.–noon
..... 7–9 p.m.

Phone 528-3795

HAVE NEEDLE; WILL (TIME) TRAVEL

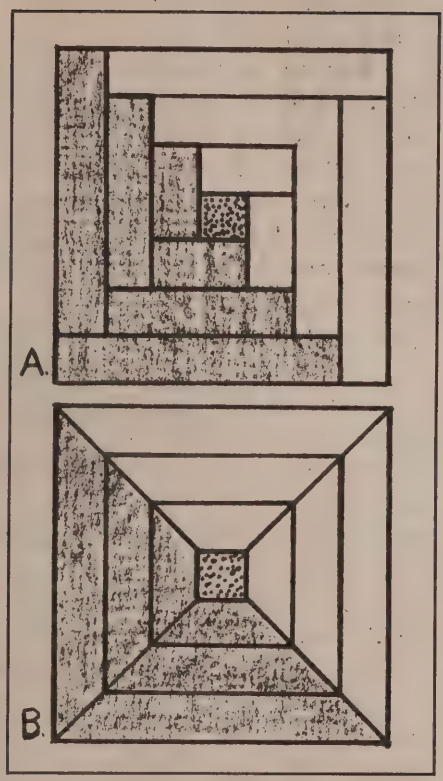
A Very Civil Quilt

"It's not museum-quality," Carole Zarlin demurred when I asked about the Log Cabin quilt hanging in the room where we sat with cups of tea. And if anyone would know the quality of a piece of needlework, it's Carole.

She's been quilting, restoring quilts, embroidering, teaching quilting, or actively involved in some form of needlecraft every day for the last forty years. I respect her estimate of the quilt's worth. But, several months after I first saw it, I'm still haunted by that regular old Log Cabin quilt.

Maybe it was the simplicity of the pattern. A Log Cabin quilt is made of a series of square blocks. The blocks are made of rectangles, usually built around a center square. Traditionally, when the center square is present, it's made of red fabric and represents the glowing hearthfire at the center of the cabin. When made of yellow fabric, another traditional option, the center square symbolizes the light streaming from the cabin windows.

Many striking quilt tops have grown from the different ways the light and dark sections of the blocks are arranged when they are pieced together.



In a typical Log Cabin block, the ends of the rectangular blocks are meant to appear as if they are logs chinked together to form walls (A). The corners are not mitered as they are in B.

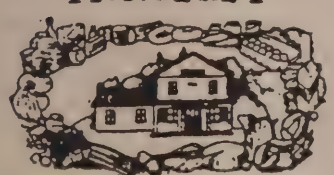
Carole says her quilt is pieced in a Straight Furrows pattern. Other patterns built from Log Cabin blocks are called Barn Raising, Courthouse Steps, Falling Timbers, Zigzag, Light and Dark.

The names of Log Cabin patterns are evocative of simple times, so maybe I was just being nostalgic when I looked at Carole's quilt. Despite the rich earth tones of the piece hanging in her living room, I might have seen instead the pastel Light and Dark quilt I took my afternoon naps under fifty years ago. Or maybe I was being haunted by an even earlier time.

"It's pre–Civil War," Carole said, too, about her quilt. For folks traveling the Underground Railway, a quilt hanging out on a rail fence often served to send a message. A log cabin pattern signaled the information, "Welcome; this is a safe house." At the Zarlins' home, this quilt's symbolic meaning still holds true.

— MaryKate Jordan

MONTEREY



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LOVE WARMTH

It was April fourteenth
and the sun was ashining,
swamp grasses were dancing
as to show their gold lining.

Beaver sticks of all sizes
were forming a dam;
I found a good staff
for guiding feet over land.

With a twelve-foot-long pole
for crossing the dips,
I balanced over water
with the grace of my hips.

While finding my way
upstream for a while,
one beautiful spot
gave me rest with a smile.

Onward I ventured
through thicket and thorns,
came out in a clearing
of downed trees locking horns.

All of this stubble,
all of these stumps
brought visions of turmoil
and life's many bumps.

I came to a dam
enormous in size,
I followed its beauty
with the keenest of eyes.

Beaver sticks of all shapes
lay there for the viewing,
I got a strong sense
of a love that's renewing.

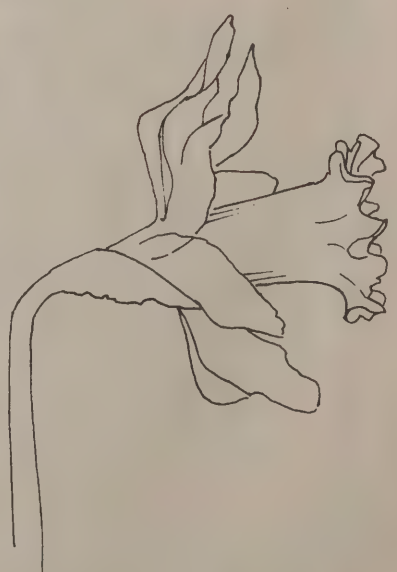
I felt a strong presence
of one I hold high;
a very soft breeze
let me know he'd stopped by.

He flowed all around me,
he flowed to and fro,
he came right into me,
I filled head to toe.

This day I'll remember,
this day I hold dear;
may his love and his grace
be forever this near.

I know he is with me,
I sense he will stay;
he asks of me only
to listen and pray.

— Wayne Dunlop



A SOUL

is aware of the surface,
a surprised flounder,
an unwaterlogged thing,
slowly rising,

seeing outside itself
into the water,
the surface is apparent,
above, like a veil,

not to break through,
but to rise to,
to be near,
just beneath.

— Peter Shepley

ORBS

Such spheres arising out of night
all stars are living rounded light

though chaos fall like blackened rain
against a flame all's orbed again

a double-mirrored tripled view
kaleidoscopic prism'd new

and out of fragments random shine
the patterns ordered and divine

the world is crowding in and we
that prism our protection see

a pile of quotidian bits
to grow a rose-cross, so be it

as lovers grasp we warming palms
a ring against our lives' alarms

the circle's centered by intent
a cry of pain, a curtain rent

I see past wonder and past eyes in you
that single light reloved and true

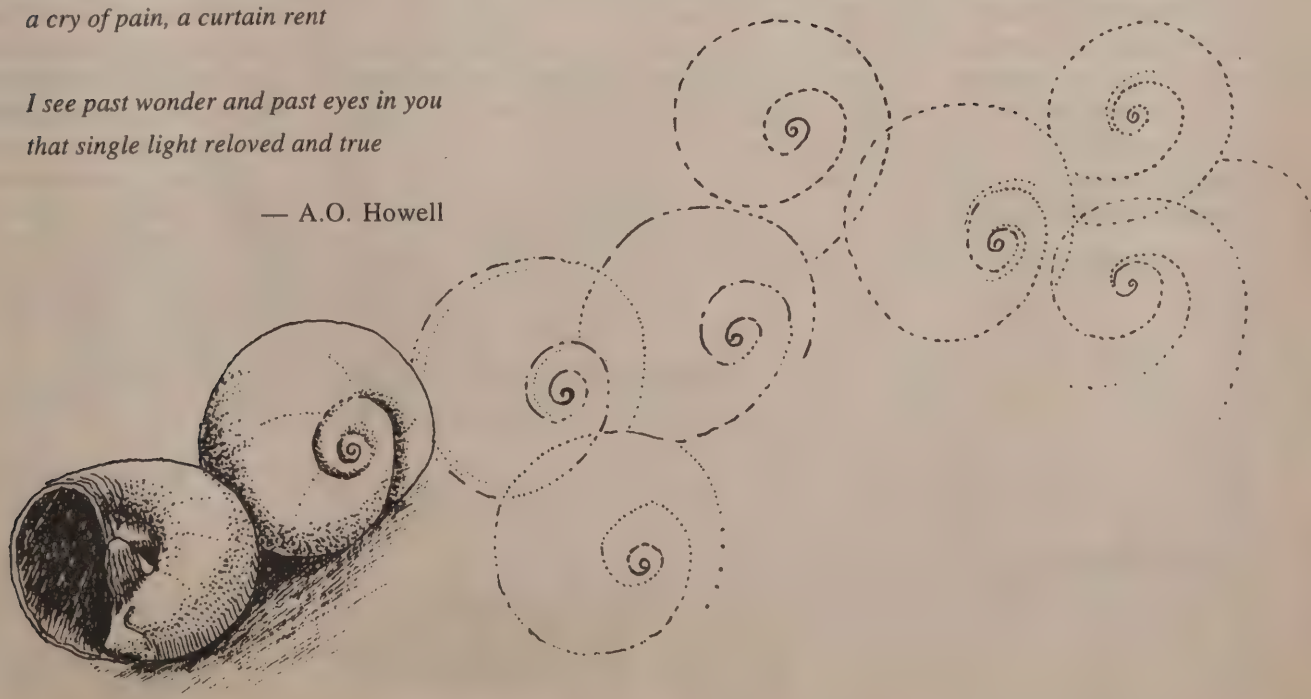
— A.O. Howell

GOING FREE

When I come to the end
Of this entertaining interim,
Will I stand for judgement
("Sorry, Boss!")
Or will I go free,
Dissolve into a trillion
Consciousnesses, each
Independent of time and space,
Understanding everything
Hidden to us here and now,
Uniting with the sweet influences
Of the Pleiades, rejoicing in the
Evolution of Cosmic dust,
The crumbling of mountains,
The triumphant coming and going
Of every single blade of grass?

If that is what's to come,
What's so different from
Imagining it all, now?

— David McAllester



REPRAP

Today, the announcement was made that Fleet Financial Group will acquire BankBoston Corporation in a $16 billion stock deal that will make Fleet the nation's eighth largest bank. The alliance of New England's two largest banks results in a less competitive banking market for consumers which can yield higher fees and less service. In this era of merger mania, we need to take steps to insure that consumers receive information and education to make decisions regarding their savings and financial livelihood. In this legislative session I have sponsored three bills seeking to do just that.

The Committee on Banks and Banking recently held a hearing on a bill I authored requiring certain information on credit cards. The measure mandated that any credit card issued in Massachusetts list on the reverse side the maximum rate of interest that may be charged. If the interest rate changes before the card's expiration date, the company would be required to mail a sticker to the customer listing the new rate, which can be affixed to the back of the card. This provides the consumer with readily available information about the interest that will be charged on purchases or cash advances.

I am also the chief sponsor of a bill that would ban the issuance of unsolicited checks. The proposed legislation would prohibit banks, credit card companies, and financial institutions from mailing unsolicited checks to Massachusetts citizens. In recent years, many private citizens have received checks from these businesses instructing individuals to cash checks that value from as little as $3 to as great as $45,000. By cashing these checks, the individuals can unknowingly join a club of some sort where dues are billed through their electric or phone bills, or take out a line of credit requiring full repayment plus interest. Without reading the fine print on the back of the check, many consumers fall prey to this scam. The prohibition of unsolicited checks will make it difficult for companies to target needy and unsuspecting victims and dupe them out of their hard-earned money.

Another of my goals for this session is to ensure the passage of the bill I cosponsored banning ATM surcharges. The fees for automated teller machines have risen nearly 50% in the last six years, with the banking industry socking it twice to ATM consumers. Commonly bank customers are charged a transaction fee when they make a withdrawal from a bank other than their own. However what is unknown to many consumers is that many banks are now charging up to $2.00 on top of the transaction fee to the bank from which the withdrawal is made. It is time to say enough is enough with outrageous and greedy ATM fees and ban these surcharges.

As always, please feel free to contact me at 243-0289 with any questions or concerns regarding these or any other matters.

— Rep. Christopher J. Hodgkins

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CET CLOTHING DRIVE

The Center for Ecological Technology (Cet) will be conducting its fourth annual used clothing and textile drive to collect and recycle old clothing and household items. The drive is held in partnership with Goodwill Industries of the Berkshires in celebration of Earth Day, and will take place on Friday through Sunday, April 24–26, from 9:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. All items should be brought to CET's rear parking lot at 112 Elm Street in Pittsfield.

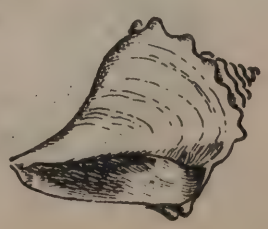
Clothing can also be dropped off on different dates at any of the other drop-off locations throughout Berkshire County, including the **United Church of Christ in Monterey**, where items can be left anytime on April 30 and May 1. A list of other locations, addresses, and telephone numbers are available from CET.

All types of reusable clothing are accepted, including sweaters, shirts, pants, jackets, overcoats, mittens, gloves, shoes, and socks. Sheets, towels, and curtains are also acceptable. Clothing must be clean, dry, and bagged in plastic bags.

Last year the clothing drive collected over 25,000 pounds of materials. Goodwill resales the wearable clothing at their local stores and sends the remainder to the textile market. The event is coordinated with assistance from the Southern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District and the Tri-Town Health Department.

For more information, please call Marilyn Maxwell or Al Silverstein at CET, 413-445-4556 or 1-800-238-1221. CET is a non-profit community organization active in the fields of energy and resource conservation and solid waste management. It has offices in Pittsfield and Northampon.

— Marilyn Maxwell



THINGS I LEARNED AT GOULD FARM (AFTER 40)

Age. It's not very relevant—it just gives us a place to stand. Archimedes (the Greek mathematician, speaking of lever action) said, "Give me where to stand, and I will move the earth." A child can move the earth—just watch a child. Harriet and Roma and George and Virginia and Loul have stood more places than the rest of us—they have something to teach us. I see people here trying harder to listen across the gap of age. Age is just a place to stand; a place we once stood; a place we hope to stand; a place we are moved to hear about.

Community. It's the people you find around you. It is not the same as your circle of friends—it's probably more important than friends. It's not community unless you tell them, somehow, just a bit of your fears and bad stuff as well as the fun and proud things. And it doesn't work unless you know and care a bit about their fears and bad stuff as well as the fun and proud things. The guests of Gould Farm come for rest, space, learning, teaching, healing. In their restorative journey, they create a deeper community here.

Farm animals and pets. Some of them are mammals, so we humans have an instant point of identification with them. Some of them are avians, and most of us are ambivalent—we envy their flight and mistrust their quick movements. (Remember when you tried to catch a chicken?) Animals—we ponder their smaller-world-than-ours as we admire their fear-trust and beauty, their health and strength, their smart learning. Farmers know they have the right number of beef cattle if they can rub each head at feeding time. If you can't stroke each of your dairy cows (firmly, down the length of her back, four times) at each milking, you have too many cows. Try that in a new-fangled milking parlor with eighty cows, like I used to have. It doesn't work! And when you rub them, watch them stretch, especially the Ayrshires. Your massage therapist would be proud of you! Pigs love rubbing, too. Sheep are wooly. Llamas are an enigma—even their ears are question marks. Love animals, and after their short, happy lives, you can eat them, respectfully.

© WAYNE DUNLOP

Awaiting

Emotions. I've had more emotions at Gould Farm than ever in my life before (isn't that an odd way to put it?). But it's something about this place—what Gould Farm is all about. The care and caring, watching and waiting, holding and modulating of the emotional life of each other in the community. One of the few things that cycles faster than common household electricity (60 hertz or cycles per second) is the mood of the average person. There are so many blessings in life that I think I will finally be able to bear the pain of loss of my elder son, by suicide, at age 21. I have learned more of love, of trust, of admiration, of the miracle of life than I really wanted to know. But as Hans' father quoted Gerald Manley Hopkins in an e-letter yesterday, "There lives the dearest freshness, deep down things."

— Gould Farm Community Member

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BE WARY OF STRANGERS— IN ECOLOGY

There is a conservative element at work in this country and elsewhere, a group of biologists whose mission is to control the spread of foreigners. These scientists and their local hit-people are like some kind of immigration-control vigilantes when it comes to non-native species of plants and animals. They fight foreigners with shovels, clippers, poisons, and fire. They put up signs with photos, like mug shots on the post office wall: if you see this plant, rip it out, tear it up, report it to the authorities!

For some of us this is a difficult fear to embrace. We have grown up fearing the Communists, nuclear war, pollution, bad neighborhoods. Only in science fiction did we ever think we would have to be wary of new sorts of plants or animals. Sure, it is a little freaky to have hundreds of ladybugs in our houses all of a sudden, and it has been noted that they may bite. But this is nothing compared with the holes in the ozone layer, the poisoning of water supplies, and the other effects of human overpopulation, right?

The diversity biologists would say the preservation of native populations of plants and animals in ecological balance is of utmost importance. They would say we should be looking around for signs of our native ladybugs. Have they been displaced by the aggressive Asian Ladybugs? If so, what has happened to the aphids in our orchards? Do the new ladybugs prey upon them as the old ones did, or do they prey upon something else? Will we see an explosion of aphids, or will the aphids disappear, and if they do, will we get more apples or will some other little sucker come along to make holes in the apple leaves, and might this new creature also carry certain diseases that were never seen here before?

The picture is too complicated, the balance too intricate, even for a computer model. When an eager entrepreneur brought the first gypsy moth caterpillars to these parts hoping to start a silk industry, he never dreamed his box of workers would tip over and turn into a scourge that is checked only by its own periodic overpopulation and resulting virus epidemics. Very few birds can eat gypsy moth caterpillars because they are covered with such sharp spiky hairs. Cuckoos can eat them, but we do not have many cuckoos in these parts.

In Hawaii life was good before the arrival of European sailing ships with their rats and their sailors. Both carried diseases that swept the islands where local populations had no immunities. In more recent times shortsighted biologists introduced mongooses to Hawaii in hopes they would prey on the rats. Only after the mongoose population had exploded and become a problem did the people realize that rats are nocturnal and mongooses diurnal so that the two groups of immigrants would never meet. (I don't know what, if anything, can be done about sailors.)

In Yellowstone Park the wolf reintroduction project has been well publicized. In this case, a local native had been removed from the picture and the resulting imbalance had led to population explosions of coyotes and large grazing mammals Only two years after the wolves had been brought back, the numbers of big grazers and coyotes were down to more balanced levels and the numbers of small rodents like ground squirrels were growing. As a result, large birds of prey were on the increase. Who could have predicted that bringing back the wolves would help the golden eagles?

These predictions are so difficult to make because the complexity of the ecological web is just about inconceivable. When I taught science to seventh graders years ago, we used to make a diagram on the blackboard. The students would give names of plants and animals in our community: cat, rat, grass, meadow mouse, robin, maple tree, blackberry brambles, fox, weasel, goldenrod, mosquito. We would write these on the blackboard at random, each with a circle around it, and then start connecting up the circles wherever there was a relationship. A fox eats

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Wolf, Mongoose, and Gypsy Moth enjoy a spring picnic of milfoil.

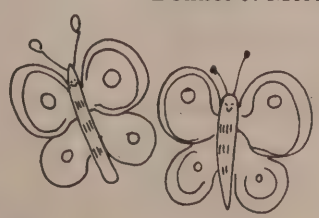
blackberries, so we would draw a line between these two. A meadow mouse makes its nest of grass, so we drew a line there. A cat eats a rat. A rat will eat young meadow mice. A robin nests in a maple tree.

Before long we would have a real web of lines all over the blackboard. Then I would say, Okay, what happens if we remove just one of these plants or animals, say the fox? We would erase the fox and then make red wiggles over the connecting lines radiating out from that place to the direct and indirect connections. Pretty soon the whole board was a mess of red wiggles.

We could have made a real mess of red wiggles if we had removed a maple tree or the goldenrod, or if we had introduced a mongoose or a gypsy moth. The difficult thing for us self-appointed managers of the planet is figuring out how to make things better, and what we mean by "better" anyhow. I think the reintroduction of wolves has made the Yellowstone ecosystem better. Ranchers just outside the park don't think so because they know wolves will prey upon calves. But it is also true that exploding elk populations have grazed where the ranchers want their cattle to graze.

In Monterey we have the Lake Garfield Association thinking of introducing a new type of weevil to control the introduced Eurasian milfoil. I would say, remember that the wiggly red lines will ripple all over the lake, and maybe not stop there. Is the milfoil weevil an old friend, a former community member who once kept virulent strangers at bay? Or is it a gypsy moth in wolf's clothing?

— Bonner J. McAllester



NEW MARLBOROUGH/ MONTEREY SCHOOL NEWS

NO TV FOR A WEEK! It's not a punishment but rather a challenge put forth by RIF (Reading is Fundamental), the New Marlborough town library, and the PTA. Each student in Monterey and New Marlborough was issued a No. TV pledge card for the week of March 12–18. A list of alternative activities was also handed out. How about listening to the radio, writing a letter, playing a board game, building a fort, or reading! To make sure the latter was possible, RIF did a free book distribution to both schools. Also, the PTA sponsored a Scholastic Book Fair during the week. In keeping with this fair's theme of camping, a "camp out" took place at NMC on Wednesday, March 17. And for additional incentive, for every thirty minutes of reading time recorded during this week, a piece of paper was issued to help cover a big paper TV. We'll check in next month to see how much was covered.

If you ever wonder where the funds go that the PTA raises, here is a good example. On April 2 the fourth-grade students from NMC and UME will travel to Boston for a day at the Boston Science Museum. Transportation is being paid for by the UME PTO and NMC PTA.

— Debbie Mielke

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THE WINGS OF VERNAL EQUINOX

If the stopover visit of a snowy owl on its annual migration to the north might be seen here as an unwelcome symbol of the past lingering winter, its subsequent departure cannot come too soon for various species of waterfowl, rabbits, and rodents.

With the dawn of spring, its untimely exit may be hastened by an angry flock of attacking crows that never miss an opportunity to bedevil a sleepy owl, and unceremoniously chase it out of town.

Even though it has diurnal vision, a snowy owl may be momentarily blinded by the first light of day, but when gathering numbers of diving crows get on its case, it will give up its morning perch. With white wing beats it will launch its flight upward until sufficiently airborne, and so glide away like a ghost of winter from the din of the antagonistic horde and the penetrating glint of the melting marsh.

When its predatory presence is long out of sight and mind, pairs of mallards and wood ducks in spring plumage will arrive on warming winds and whistling wings of vernal equinox. As they stake their homestead claims upon liberated waters, the wood ducks will take occupancy of the wooden nesting boxes provided as free housing by conservationists.

With the renewal of another life cycle, the bleak panorama of bird life across the Gould Farm wetlands will transform from adversarial black and white opposites into a reincarnation of color that seems to come alive with the calls of the red-winged blackbirds.

For any of us who live in the Berkshires, spring is a time that draws us ever closer to special wild places where we already feel a strong affinity to the land. Perhaps the better part of an instinctive human nature feels a nostalgic tug of an environmental umbilical cord that forever ties us to mother earth.

When along the edge of ice frost line heaves
the earth rises before dawn
finally the long winter
of her labor is gone
and during the dark of night
another season is borne.

When I walked Diane's trail for the first time, and saw all the work that has gone into the bridge, the wooden platforms along the way, the signs and markers, and the illustrated guide of the Gould Farm sanctuary, a certain Native American belief kept coming to mind . . . "the spirit of whatever happens in a place, good or bad, may always live there!"

At the point of the trail where Rawson Brook and the Konkapot River come together to form one tributary, there is a sense of a connection to the origin of the memorial that comes shining through.

For as long as the waters and wings of vernal equinox come together out of the hills, it might be said that a medium for a spirit that lives there is a bridge between heaven and earth.

— George Emmons

WILDLIFE SURVEY

Signs of spring. Obdurate winter is drawing off and all kinds of spring signs cheer us on, these equinoctial days.

Snowgeese. Four large wedges passed over Monterey at 6:30 a.m., March 31, headed north. The early sun lit up their white undersides and the black wingtips were visible. Instead of bugling like Canada geese they were gabbling. They were heading right for a day in the big cornfields in Tyringham Valley where they have been seen around this time in recent years.

Coltsfoot is the first wild flower. At the same time crocuses and snowdrops gladden the eye near the house, this hardy, semi-aquatic plant puts up a dandelion-like blossom in almost any wet, sunny place. After the blossoms have gone by, the leaves grow. And grow! All summer they cover the wet places with dense crowds of large octagonal leaves on fragile celery-like stalks as much as a foot high.

Woodcocks. Susan Sellew reports several at Rawson Brook Farm with their whistling wings and the aerial song of the males. Their music is one of the treats of early spring: they fly high up with a twittering sound of wings and then produce a bubbling warble as they come down. Also at Rawson Brook in late March: **wood ducks** and **muskrats.**

Spring peepers were tuning up in Marsh Pond, the big pond by Rt. 23 in South Egremont, the evening of March 29.

Pussywillows have been showing more and more silver all month; willow twigs are yellow and osier is red; hobblebush has its "ears" straight up and larger every day, earning its other name: moosewood.

The **sugar maples** have been putting out sap nobly. There was an unusually abundant first run in February with a high sugar content that made a bumper crop of "light amber" syrup.

Snow fleas are showing up in the still water of melting ponds and the puddles in muddy roads. Bonner McAllester found some of the sugaring spiles on the maples full of them, March 30. **Moths** are turning up in the sap buckets as well as on windowpanes as the nights turn warm.

A **saw-whet owl** was singing across Lake Garfield from Mick Burns' house, March 13 and, when Mick imitated the song, it flew right across to investigate. It sailed fearlessly close even though it is smaller than a robin. The song is a long string of mellow whistles in fast succession, like the strokes of a file sharpening a saw. At the McAllester-Baker homestead the first **phoebe** arrived March 28, the same date as last year. A **purple finch** was in the feeder two days before, and Joe heard a **bluebird** next door at about the same time.

Bonner and Ruby met a very large **porcupine** March 29, on the back of Chestnut Hill in a steep area of tumbled rocks, dens, nooks, and crannies. There were signs of porcupine occupancy and domestication everywhere, including one small beech with the bark gnawed off from base to tip.

— David P. McAllester

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GRETA S. CHERNEFF

Greta S. Cherneff, a woman truly loved and admired by everyone who knew her, died Thursday March 11, 1999 at home. She was 67 and died of an incredibly aggressive form of cancer.

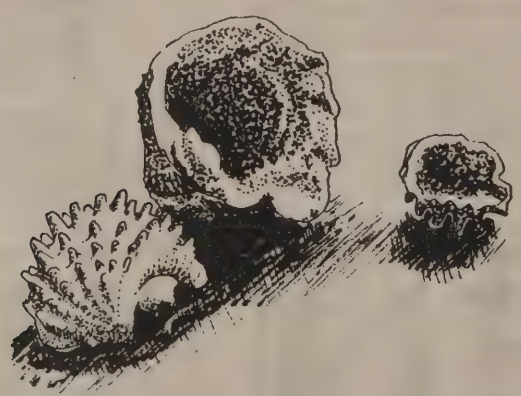
Greta was a person of wide interests and unusual capabilities. She was the chairperson of the Monterey Finance Committee and Treasurer of the Monterey Democratic Party. She was also a board member of the Berkshire Friends of Music. She also provided an accounting service for small business in South Berkshire County.

Before moving to Monterey in 1988 she lived in Deerfield, Illinois for eighteen years.

In her personal and professional life she was regarded by everyone as an unusually loyal and helpful relative and friend. She was known far and wide as an accomplished cook, baker, and hostess.

The daughter of Jack and Essie Lowen, Greta was born and grew up in Highland Park, New Jersey, where she attended public schools and Douglass College in New Brunswick, New Jersey. She was married to Martin Cherneff, who survives her, on January 11, 1959, in Ansche Emeth Temple, of which her family were long time members. Other survivors are her daughter, Ruth E. Cherneff, and son-in-law, Dr. Cary G. Pfeffer, of Brookline, Massachusetts, sons Richard H. Cherneff of Ashley Falls, Massachusetts, and Steven R. Cherneff of San Francisco, California, and brother and sister-in-law Jerome and Blossom Lowen, of Highland Park, New Jersey, and Miami, Florida.

A memorial service was held on Sunday, March 14, 1999, at the Old Meeting House in Monterey. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, or Gould Farm, a residential psychiatric rehabilitation community in Monterey.



PERSONAL NOTES

I'm writing this month's column on the morning of St. Patrick's Day and, as I look out the window, the weather is so pleasant and sunny that I can almost ignore the snow and imagine spring is here. In Ireland, spring has already arrived, and the daffodils and crocuses are already in bloom by the time St. Patrick's Day comes around, so perhaps that accounts for my illusion. I noticed this morning that the first tiny daffodil shoots have appeared in my flowerbeds, a sign that winter is almost over and we can start to plan our gardens.

Birthday greetings go out this month to **Maynard Forbes** and **Wendy Tryon** on April 2, to **Eric Pedersen** and **Karl Quisenberry** on April 4, to **Bonnie Cox** on April 8, to **Andrew Doherty** on April 16, to **Don Coburn** and **Lily Chapman** on April 18, to **Cody Funk** on April 24, and to **Grace Burke** on April 28.

Congratulations to **Mark** and **Theresa Amstead** on the arrival of their twin sons, **Mitchell Donald** and **Matthew Albert**, born February 2. The proud grandparents are **Donald** and **Patricia Amstead** of Monterey, and **Albert** and **Charlotte Piretti** of Great Barrington.

We enjoy hearing your news, and passing on birthday and anniversary greetings. If you have any you would like to share, please drop me a line at P.O. Box 351, Monterey, MA 01245, if possible, before the twelth of each month. Thank you so much.

— Ann Higgins

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To the Editor:

The community of Monterey should consider cable.

Before moving to Monterey I was a resident of Egremont where I served as head of the cable committee. For years the cable industry was undercapitalized and known for poor service. Many companies went bankrupt. Recently dramatic changes have occurred. AT&T bought TCI, the country's largest cable company, and Bill Gates of Microsoft invested in Comcast. These developments legitimized the superiority of cable's fibre optics technology for reaching the home. As voice, data, and video converge the technology with the widest and fastest pipe will best serve consumers. And cable provides this in spades. Soon the industry will introduce sophisticated digital set-top boxes with enormous capacity.

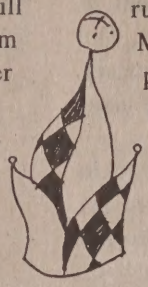
I know the people at Century Communications in Lee, the local cable system.

They would be willing to survey Monterey for cable at their expense. Monterey should take this opportunity. We have everything to gain. Some day our children will thank us for enabling them to download the Library of Congress in seconds. Cool.

— L. Robert Duffy

MONTEREY NEWS HAS NEW EDITOR

With the April issue of the *Monterey News* we welcome our new editorial and layout team of Will Marsh and Glynis Oliver, long-term residents of Monterey on River Road.



We say farewell to former editor Maggie Leonard, who put the paper out with unflappable good grace from September 1997 through February 1999. She had to resign suddenly to move to Baltimore to care for her husband, John Humphrey, after he was seriously injured in a car accident. Maggie had help during the last six months of her editorship from assistant editor Jon Sylbert, particularly with computer mysteries and layout, which he took over completely in January and February. Then former editor Peter Murkett stepped in to put out the paper in March while we searched the woods for a new editor.

We are pleased to have found Glynis and Will. Look for a profile of them by David McAllester in the next issue of the *News*.

— Bonner McAllester, President
Monterey News Board of Directors

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Spring training: Tarsi Dunlop and ballet class

DR. JERROLD RAAB
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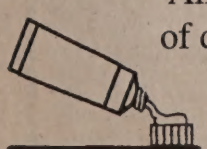
All phases of dentistry



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TOWN REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

The Town Republican Caucus was held at the Firehouse on March 6, 1999, with fourteen Republicans present. It was chaired by George Emmons. The Caucus nominated the slate of candidates for Town Offices reported elsewhere in this issue.

We welcome four new members to the committee, Richard Haapanen, Sarah Bingham Orenstein, Leroy Thorpe, and Dewey Vorck.

— Linda Thorpe

TRANSFER STATION GOES ON SUMMER HOURS

The Monterey Transfer Station will go on the summer schedule beginning Sunday, April 4, 1999. Hours are as follows:

SUNDAY: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
WEDNESDAY: 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. (unchanged)
SATURDAY: 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. (unchanged)

Applications for authorized users' vehicles may be obtained at the town hall at any time; completed applications, together with the fee, may be mailed or left at Town Hall. The sticker will be mailed to the applicant.

— Monterey Select Board

CONTRIBUTORS

We are grateful for contributions recently received from

Mary Kimberly
Nancy Beach
Donald Amstead, Sr.
Ronald and Pearl Gunther
Ray Kirby, Sr.
Peter & Mary Alice Amidon
Virginia Cesario
Susan & Dwight Miller
Edwin Salsitz
Susan Erda
Cathy Roth & Vicky Reed
Mrs. L. Henry
Royal & Georgiann Shepard
Marian Bernstein

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Arrival

CALENDAR

Monday, April 5, Special Town Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Firehouse.

Tuesday, April 6, International folk, contra, square, and line dancing, 7:30–9:30 p.m. at Gould Farm, led by Karl Finger.Full instruction, all welcome, refreshments. Contributions $5 adults, $2 children. Information, Kim at 528-1804 or Karl at 528-2963.

Monday, April 19

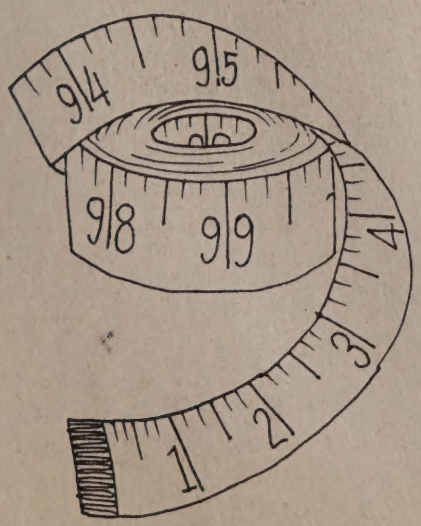
Monterey Town Offices closed for Patriots' Day.

South County La Leche League, 10:30–noon, at the Guthrie Center, Great Barrington. Free advice and support for breastfeeding. For questions and directions, call Maureen at 528-6619.

Tuesday, April 20, Blood pressure clinic, 9–10:30 a.m., in the basement of the Town Offices, administered by the Visiting Nurses Association.

Saturday, April 24

Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 p.m. at the Sheffield Grange, Route 7, Sheffield, Mass. Music by Mountain Laurel, calling by Paul Rosenberg. All dances are taught and beginners and children are welcome. Refreshments served at intermission. Adults $5, children $2. For information call 413-528-9385 or 518-329-7578.



Nineteenth-century charcoal burn demonstration and lecture. Burn will be at 11 a.m. at the Bidwell House, Art School Road. Lecture and slide presentation will be at 8 p.m. at the Monterey Meeting House (United Church of Christ) on Route 23 in Monterey center. Admission is free.

Sunday , April 25, Nineteenth-century charcoal burn demonstration, 11 a.m. at Bidwell House, Art School Road. Admission is free.

THE OBSERVER

February 26–March 25

High temp. (3/18)	60.3°
Low temp. (3/8)	3.7°
Avg. high temp.	39.1°
Avg. low temp.	21.4°
Avg. temp.	30.3°
High bar. press. (3/8)	30.32"
Low bar. press. (3/1)	29.02"
High wind gust (3/18)	44 mph
Low wind chill temp (3/8)	29.2°
Total precipitation (rain and melted snow)	5.64"
Snowfall	18.5"

Precipitation occurred on 14 days

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..... David McAllester
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Mailing Labels ..... Ian Jenkins
Business Manager ..... Barbara Tryon
Treasurer ..... Mari Makuc

Our editorial address is *Monterey News*, P. O. Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. We invite letters, articles, drawings, and photographs from readers. Please send submissions (on PC disk if possible) by the fifteenth of the month before publication, addressed to the attention of the Editor. Send any change of address, or initial request to receive the *News* by mail (free!) to Barbara Tryon, Business Manager. We will typeset a text-only ad for your Monterey-based business, service, or event, or advertisers may submit an ad with graphics on a PC formatted disk. Address your request for advertising rates and further information to the Editor, or telephone us in Monterey at 413-528-4347.

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Contributions from local artists this month: Bonner McAllester, p. 17; George Emmons, p. 18; Glynis Oliver, pp. 5, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23

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